

*Great to be back in person at*

# **EPHMRA 2023 Conference**

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**Branding Science attended the 2023 EPHMRA conference in London, and there was a great buzz about the place, with the conference being held in person for the first time since 2019.**



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Some exciting key themes were discussed, ranging from AI and how it's expected to transform the world, through to the need for ongoing innovation (but not necessarily through technology), in how we gather and deliver insights.

There were also interesting discussions around how agencies need to be their client's partner and guide them in the evolving landscape of market research.

The conference started and ended with sessions on AI, which reflected the ever-increasing mix of excitement and nervousness around this hot topic.

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The majority of us also expected our jobs in their current form to be taken over by AI. We like to think there is still some hope for us though, as AI is very good at convergent thinking but falls down when it comes to divergent thinking, which is where human thinking comes in – one paper dubbed this unique strength as Human Intelligence.

There were also talks discussing how to successfully launch a brand and how employees and companies' most influential stakeholders, with forays into the future of market research and how to engage with millennials (patients and HCPs). Overall, a wide range of topics were on offer and triggered many discussions between sessions.



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# Key findings

## Remember the value of people

Despite the meteoric rise of AI, it's not about doing everything quicker and cheaper – we must continue to focus on adding value for our clients. Whilst the methods we use are great, the true value comes from the people in our businesses and their thinking.

## AI cannot solve everything

AI will help fill some of the gaps but is unlikely to be the be all and end all. We may not like to admit it, but some of us at Branding Science are old enough to remember a time when it was claimed online surveys were going to remove the need for any face-to-face research!

## Importance of face-to-face

Nothing beats face-to-face, whether that's meeting old friends in the industry, making new ones, or sitting with respondents for interviews. However, as the likelihood of returning to pre-pandemic levels of in-person contact is low, we need to be proactively looking at ways to maintain the value of our interactions (quarterly insights reviews, anyone?). It's down to the agencies to lead the charge – challenge accepted!

## Increased focus on client need

Focusing on client need is more important than ever, with both agencies and internal insights colleagues being under pressure to deliver value. Having a clear vision on the need for, and the plan to get, the 'killer insight' is critical. From a pharma perspective, ensuring that insights are foundational to brand development is key, as this allows us all to maximise the value we add.



## What did you think?

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What were your take aways from the conference – is there anything that you think we missed? What would you like to see more of at next year's annual conference? Feel free to reach out and let us know!



Please contact Chris Pickering ([Christopher.Pickering@branding-science.com](mailto:Christopher.Pickering@branding-science.com)) or Nick Ross ([Nick.Ross@branding-science.com](mailto:Nick.Ross@branding-science.com)) if you would like to discuss.



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